

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Health Services



SANDRA SHEWRY
Director



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

January 30, 2007

Dear Stakeholder:

I am writing to ask you to participate in an important initiative to help California's healthcare system prepare for a major disaster that could lead to a significantly increased demand for medical services.

Providing healthcare during a large-scale public health emergency presents significant challenges for healthcare facilities, licensed healthcare professionals, local health departments, and communities. During emergency events, healthcare systems must convert quickly from their existing patient capacity to "surge capacity" - a significant increase beyond usual capacity - to rapidly respond to the needs of affected individuals. The demands of a sustained or catastrophic emergency may prevent operating in accordance with existing healthcare standards. While California has healthcare standards for use during normal conditions, it is essential that California provide guidance with regard to the standards likely to be in effect during sustained emergency operations. This guidance should address professional standards of practice, facility operations, liability of hospitals and professionals, reimbursement of care, and standards for operations of alternate care sites. California is the first state to address surge planning in this manner.

The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) has contracted with PricewaterhouseCoopers, an international consulting firm, in an aggressive six-month project to address this challenge. The goal of this project is to provide the following:

- A standards and guidelines manual that addresses the existing statutes and regulations that currently govern the standards of care, and identifies those that may be flexed or waived during a declared emergency;
- Operational tools that will guide healthcare planners in the adoption and implementation of new temporary standards; and
- A training curriculum to support the planning and preparation for optimal surge response.

The success of this project depends on your involvement and that of other stakeholders to satisfactorily address issues and possible impediments to planning for the optimal surge response. We invite you to help address the complex issues of surge planning by actively participating in three Collaborative

Design Sessions. The Collaborative Design Sessions will be multi-day working sessions during which participants will identify the complex issues and gaps in current preparedness efforts with regard to the various aspects of surge planning. Resolution of gaps and issues identified at the Collaborative Design Sessions will take place in smaller workgroups that will be formed and convene after completion of the sessions.

The first Collaborative Design Session, focused on the operational aspects of surge planning – beds, facilities, labor, supplies, and equipment – will be a three-day session held from February 27 to March 1, 2007 in San Jose. The second Collaborative Design Session, focused on standards, guidelines and liability, will be a two-day session held on March 5 and 6, 2007 in Los Angeles. The third Collaborative Design Session, focused on reimbursement, will be a two-day session held on March 8 and 9, 2007 in Los Angeles. We anticipate approximately 100 participants for each Collaborative Design Session. If the number of participants registered for any session exceeds available space, we will implement a process of selection to determine the final attendees to the sessions. All interested stakeholders will be able to participate in the workgroups formed to resolve the issues and gaps identified in the Collaborative Design Sessions.

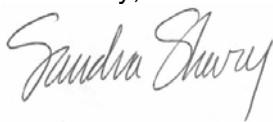
The enclosed materials provide a more detailed description of how CDHS and PricewaterhouseCoopers have organized this project and how you can participate. These materials are also available on our website at <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/epo/surge>

I actively encourage you and/or your organization to join us. You can indicate your interest in participating in one or more of the Collaborative Design Sessions, the workgroups, or being informed of progress throughout the project by registering on our website or by calling PricewaterhouseCoopers at (213) 217-3900. All registration will occur through this process.

On February 5 and February 8, 2007, we will hold one-hour teleconference sessions at 11 am to provide an overview of the project. The teleconference dial-in number for February 5 is (888) 801-1508, the access code is 861511. The dial-in number for February 8 is (888) 801-1513, the access code is 861512. If you have any questions about this letter, please feel free to contact Ted Selby in CDHS' Emergency Preparedness Office at (916) 650-6416.

I thank you in advance and look forward to collaborating with you in this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sandra Shewry".

Sandra Shewry
Director

Enclosures